

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:
 - facilitating the creation of a Category A data file having a first set of characteristics defined utilizing a common language architecture;
 - facilitating the creation of a Category B data file having a second set of characteristics defined utilizing the common language architecture; and
 - matching characteristics in the Category A data file to characteristics in the Category B data file using the common language architecture.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first set of characteristics includes a subset of desired Category B characteristics.
3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the Category A data file describes a job-seeker, and the desired Category B characteristics are desired job characteristics.
4. The method of Claim 2, wherein the Category A data file describes a job, and the desired Category B characteristics are desired characteristics of a job-seeker.
5. The method of Claim 2, wherein the second set of characteristics includes a subset of desired Category A characteristics.
6. The method of Claim 5, wherein the Category A data file describes a job-seeker, and the desired Category B characteristics are desired job characteristics, and wherein the Category B data file describes a job, and the desired Category A characteristics are desired characteristics of a job-seeker.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of facilitating the creation of a Category A data file includes the step of organizing the data in the Category A data file under a first set of primary headings, wherein the step of facilitating the creation of a Category B data file includes the step of organizing the data in the Category B data file under a second set of primary headings, and wherein each of at least some of the first set of primary headings corresponds to a respective member of the second set of primary headings.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein each of a majority of the first set of primary headings corresponds to a respective member of the second set of primary headings.

9. The method of Claim 7, wherein the step of facilitating the creation of a Category A data file further includes the step of organizing the data in the Category A data file under a first set of secondary headings, wherein the step of facilitating the creation of a Category B data file includes the step of organizing the data in the Category B data file under a second set of secondary headings, wherein the first and second sets of secondary headings are organized under the first and second sets of primary headings, respectively, and wherein each of at least some of the first set of secondary headings corresponds to a respective member of the second set of secondary headings.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein each of a majority of the first set of secondary headings corresponds to a respective member of the second set of secondary headings.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein each of substantially all of the first set of secondary headings corresponds to a respective member of the second set of secondary headings.

12. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of standardization mechanisms, and wherein the step of matching step includes automatically comparing at least 75% of the characteristics in the Category A data file to corresponding characteristics in the Category B data file using a standardization mechanism.

13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of standardization mechanisms, and wherein the step of matching step includes automatically comparing at least 75% of the characteristics in the Category B data file to corresponding characteristics in the Category A data file using a standardization mechanism.

14. The method of Claim 12, wherein one of the standardization mechanisms is the comparison of a yes/no Category A characteristic to a yes/no Category B characteristic.

15. The method of Claim 12, wherein one of the standardization mechanisms is the comparison of a Category A characteristic selected from a list to a Category B characteristic selected from the same list.

16. The method of Claim 12, wherein one of the standardization mechanisms is the comparison of a plurality of Category A characteristics selected from a list to a plurality of Category B characteristics selected from a list

17. The method of Claim 12, wherein one of the standardization mechanisms is the comparison of a numerical Category A characteristic to a numerical Category B characteristic.

18. The method of Claim 17, wherein the numerical Category A characteristic is a range of possible numerical values.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the numerical Category B characteristic is a range of possible numerical values.

20. The method of Claim 12, wherein one of the standardization mechanisms is the comparison of a Category A characteristic selected from a multi-tiered library of characteristics to a Category B characteristic selected from the same multi-tiered library.

21. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a Category A data file having a first set of characteristics;

storing a Category B data file having a second set of characteristics;

associating a Category A enhancement object with the Category A data file;

associating a Category B enhancement object with the Category B data file; and

automatically matching the Category A data file to the Category B data file at least partially on the basis of the contents of the respective Category A and Category B enhancement objects.

22. The method of Claim 21, wherein the Category A data file describes a job-seeker.

23. The method of Claim 22, wherein the Category B data file describes a job.

24. The method of Claim 23, wherein the Category A enhancement object is an assessment of the thinking styles of the job-seeker, and wherein the Category B enhancement object is an assessment of the thinking styles required by the job.

25. The method of Claim 23, wherein the Category A enhancement object is an assessment of the work preferences of the job-seeker, and wherein the Category B enhancement object is an assessment of the work styles required by the job.

26. The method of Claim 23, wherein the Category A enhancement object is an assessment of the professional skills possessed by the job-seeker, and wherein the Category B enhancement object is an assessment of the professional skills required by the job.

27. The method of Claim 23, wherein the step of automatically matching the data files on the basis of the respective enhancement objects includes the step of automatically matching the data files at least partially on the basis of a comparison of the Category A enhancement object to the Category B enhancement object.

28. The method of Claim 23, further comprising the steps of:
in response to a command from a first user, facilitating the creation of the Category A enhancement object on the basis of input from the first user; and
in response to a command from a second user, facilitating the creation of the Category B enhancement object, wherein the creation of the Category B enhancement object occurs independently from the input provided by the first user.

29. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a Category A data file having a set of characteristics corresponding to a Category A item;

storing a Category B data file having a set of characteristics corresponding to a Category B item;

associating a plurality of Category A enhancement objects with the Category A data file, wherein each Category A enhancement object comprises a collection of supplemental data corresponding to the Category A item and arranged in object form; and

matching the Category A data file to the Category B data file.

30. The method of Claim 29, further comprising the step of providing the Category A data file, together with the Category A enhancement objects, to a Category B user.

31. The method of Claim 30, further comprising the step of enabling the Category B user to choose whether to access any of the Category A enhancement objects with the Category A data file.

32. The method of Claim 29, further comprising the step of associating a plurality of Category B enhancement objects with the Category B data file.

33. The method of Claim 32, further comprising the step of providing the Category B data file, together with the Category B enhancement objects, to a Category A user.

34. The method of Claim 29, wherein the Category A item is a job-seeker, and wherein the plurality of Category A enhancement objects are selected from the group consisting of a thinking styles assessment object, a work preferences assessment object, a professional skills assessment object, a mission statement and core values object, a past experiences timeline object, and a virtual interview object.

35. The method of Claim 29, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the plurality of Category A enhancement objects are selected from the group consisting of a preferred thinking styles assessment object, a preferred work preferences assessment object, a preferred professional skills assessment object, a day-in-the-life object, an organizational overview object, a group culture object, a relationship map object, and a virtual interview object.

36. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a Category A data file having a set of characteristics corresponding to a Category A item;

storing a Category B data file having a set of characteristics corresponding to a Category B item;

facilitating the creation of a Category A enhancement object in a standard format, wherein the Category A enhancement object comprises a collection of supplemental data corresponding to the Category A item and arranged in object form;

associating the Category A enhancement object with the Category A data file; and

matching the Category A data file to the Category B data file.

37. The method of Claim 36, further including the step of facilitating the creation of the Category A data file.

38. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job-seeker, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a thinking styles assessment object.

39. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job-seeker, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a work preferences assessment object.

40. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job-seeker, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a professional skills assessment object.

41. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job-seeker, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a mission statement and core values object.

42. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job-seeker, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a past experiences timeline object.

43. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job-seeker, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a virtual interview object.

44. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a preferred thinking styles assessment object

45. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a preferred work preferences assessment object.

46. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a preferred professional skills assessment object.

47. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a day-in-the-life object.

48. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is an organizational overview object.

49. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a group culture object.

50. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a relationship map object.

51. The method of 37, wherein the Category A item is a job opening, and wherein the Category A enhancement object is a virtual interview object.

52. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a Category A data file having a first set of characteristics;

storing a Category B data file having a second set of characteristics;

identifying at least one Category A data file characteristic which must be met by the Category B data file; and

identifying at least one Category B data file characteristic which must be met by the Category A data file.

53. The method of Claim 52, further comprising the step of comparing the Category A data file to the Category B data file to determine if the identified Category A data file characteristic is met by the Category B data file.

54. The method of Claim 53, further comprising the step of displaying the Category B data file to a Category A user only if the identified Category A data file characteristic is met by the Category B data file.

55. The method of Claim 53, further comprising the step of displaying the Category A data file to a Category B user only if the identified Category A data file characteristic is met by the Category B data file.

56. The method of Claim 53, further comprising the step of scoring the Category A data file against the Category B data file only if the identified Category A data file characteristic is met by the Category B data file.

57. The method of Claim 53, further comprising the step of scoring the Category B data file against the Category A data file only if the identified Category B data file characteristic is met by the Category A data file.

58. The method of Claim 53, further comprising the step of comparing the Category B data file to the Category A data file to determine if the identified Category B data file characteristic is met by the Category A data file.

59. The method of Claim 52, further comprising the steps of:
facilitating the selection, by a Category A user, of at least one Category A data file characteristic which must be met by the Category B data file; and
facilitating the selection, by a Category B user, of at least one Category B data file characteristic which must be met by the Category A data file.

60. The method of Claim 52, wherein the Category A data file describes a job-seeker and the Category B data file describes a job.

61. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a Category A data file having a first set of characteristics;

storing a Category B data file having a second set of characteristics;

weighting at least a first characteristic of the Category A data file differently from a second characteristic of the Category A data file;

weighting at least a third characteristic of the Category B data file differently from a fourth characteristic of the Category B data file; and

matching the Category A data file to the Category B data file at least partly on the basis of the differing weights of the first and second characteristics of the Category A data file and the third and fourth characteristics of the Category B data file.

62. The method of Claim 61, wherein the matching step includes examining the relationship between the first characteristic of the Category A data file and the third characteristic of the Category B data file.

63. The method of Claim 62, wherein the weight placed on the first characteristic corresponds to the importance placed on the relationship between the first and third characteristics by a Category A user.

64. The method of Claim 63, wherein the weight placed on the third characteristic corresponds to the importance placed on the relationship between the first and third characteristics by a Category B user.

65. The method of Claim 62, wherein the matching step further includes examining the relationship between the second characteristic of the Category A data file and the fourth characteristic of the Category B data file.

66. The method of Claim 61, wherein the matching step includes scoring the Category B data file against the Category A data file at least partly on the basis of the differing weights

of the first and second characteristics of the Category A data file and the third and fourth characteristics of the Category B data file.

67. The method of Claim 61, wherein the Category B data file is a first Category B data file, the method further comprising the steps of:

storing a second Category B data file; and

ordering the Category B data files according to how well the Category B data files match the Category A data file.

68. The method of Claim 67, wherein the Category A data file is a first Category A data file, the method further comprising the steps of:

storing a second Category A data file; and

ordering the Category A data files according to how well the Category A data files match the first Category B data file.

69. The method of Claim 68, further comprising the step of displaying the ordered Category A data files to a first Category B user, wherein the first Category B user corresponds to the first Category B data file.

70. The method of Claim 68, further comprising the step of separately ordering the Category A data files according to how well the Category A data files match the second Category B data file.

71. The method of Claim 70, further comprising the step of displaying the ordered Category A data files to a second Category B user, wherein the second Category B user corresponds to the second Category B data file.

72. The method of Claim 61, wherein one of the Category A data file and the Category B data file describes a job-seeker, and the other of the Category A data file and the Category B data file describes a job.

73. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a first data file having a first set of characteristics corresponding to a job-seeker,

storing a second data file having a second set of characteristics corresponding to a job;

identifying a first job-seeker data file characteristic which must be met by the second data file; and

applying relative weights to the importance of at least a second job-seeker data file characteristic and a third job-seeker data file characteristic, wherein the second job-seeker data file characteristic and the third job-seeker data file characteristic are weighted differently.

74. The method of Claim 73, further comprising the step of facilitating the selection of the first job-seeker data file characteristic from among all of the first set of characteristics.

75. The method of Claim 73, further comprising the step of facilitating the selection of the second and third job-seeker data file characteristics, from among all of the first set of characteristics, to which the weights are to be applied.

76. The method of Claim 75, further including the step of facilitating the selection of the magnitude of the weights to be applied to the second and third job-seeker data file characteristics.

77. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of Category A data files, each corresponding to a Category A user and each having a set of characteristics;

storing a plurality of Category B data files, each corresponding to a Category B user and each having a set of characteristics;

enabling a first Category A user to select a participation level for a first Category A data file with regard to the Category B users, wherein the participation levels include:

a first participation level, in which the Category B data files are available for display to the first Category A user and the first Category A data file is automatically available for display to the Category B users, and

a second participation level, in which the Category B data files are available for display to the first Category A user but the first Category A data file is available for display to each Category B user only upon the selection of a Category B data file, corresponding to the respective Category B user, by the Category A user; and

enabling a first Category B user to select a participation level for a first Category B data file with regard to the Category A users, wherein the participation levels include:

a first participation level, in which the Category A data files are available for display to the first Category B user and the first Category B data file is automatically available for display to the Category A users, and

a second participation level, in which the Category A data files are available for display to the first Category B user but the first Category B data file is available for display to each Category A user only upon the selection of a Category A data file, corresponding to the respective Category A user, by the Category B user.

78. The method of Claim 77, further comprising the steps of:

if the first participation level is selected for the first Category A data file, displaying the first Category A data file to all of the Category B data files; and

if the second participation level is selected for the first Category A data file, displaying the first Category A data file only to those Category B users corresponding to Category B data files selected by the first Category A user.

79. The method of Claim 78, further including the step of displaying the Category B data files to the first Category A user, wherein each Category B data file is displayed to the first Category A user only if the respective Category B data file is available for display to the first Category A user.

80. The method of Claim 78, further comprising the steps of:

if the first participation level is selected for the first Category B data file, displaying the first Category B data file to all of the Category A data files; and

if the second participation level is selected for the first Category B data file, displaying the first Category B data file only to those Category A users corresponding to Category A data files selected by the first Category B user.

81. The method of Claim 80, further including the steps of:

displaying the Category B data files to the first Category A user, wherein each Category B data file is displayed to the first Category A user only if the respective Category B data file is available for display to the first Category A user; and

displaying the Category A data files to the first Category B user, wherein each Category A data file is displayed to the first Category B user only if the respective Category A data file is available for display to the first Category B user.

82. The method of Claim 81, wherein if the second participation level is selected for the first Category A data file, and if the second participation level is selected for the first Category B data file, then the method further including the steps of:

preventing the first Category A data file from being viewed by the first Category B user; and

preventing the first Category B data file from being viewed by the first Category B user.

83. The method of Claim 78, wherein if the second participation level is selected for the first Category A data file, each Category B data file is displayed only if its corresponding Category B user selects a participation level in which the respective Category B data file is available for display to the first Category A user.

84. The method of Claim 78, further comprising the steps of:

if the first participation level is selected for the first Category B data file, displaying the Category A data files to the first Category B user; and

if the second participation level is selected for the first Category B data file, preventing the Category A data files from being displayed to the first Category B user.

85. The method of Claim 84, wherein if the first participation level is selected for the first Category B data file, each Category A data file is displayed only if its corresponding Category A user selects a participation level in which the respective Category A data file is available for display to the first Category B user.

86. The method of Claim 77, further comprising the step of imposing a charge on the first Category A user according to the participation level selected.

87. The method of Claim 86, further comprising the step of imposing a charge on the first Category B user according to the participation level selected.

88. The method of Claim 77, wherein the step of enabling the first Category A user includes enabling the first Category A user to select a participation level for the first Category A data file from among at least three participation levels, wherein the participation

levels include the first participation level, the second participation level, and a third participation level in which the Category B data files are available for display to the first Category A user but the first Category A data file is unavailable for display to any of the Category B users.

89. The method of Claim 88, further comprising the step of imposing a charge on the first Category A user according to the participation level selected.

90. The method of Claim 88, wherein the step of enabling the first Category B user includes enabling the first Category B user to select a participation level for the first category B data file from among at least three participation levels, wherein the participation levels include the first participation level, the second participation level, and a third participation level in which the Category A data files are available for display to the first category B user but the first Category B data file is unavailable for display to any of the Category A users.

91. The method of Claim 90, wherein the first participation level for the first Category B data file includes:

an automatic participation level in which the Category A data files are available for display to the first Category B user and the first Category B data file is automatically available for display to all of the Category A users, and

a selective participation level in which the Category A data files are available for display to the first Category B user but the first Category B data file is available for display to each Category A user only upon the selection of a Category A data file corresponding to the respective Category A user by the Category B user.

92. The method of Claim 77, further comprising the step of comparing the first Category A data file to the first Category B data file.

93. The method of Claim 92, wherein the comparing step occurs only if the first Category A user selects a participation level in which the Category A data file is available for display to the first Category B user, and if the first Category B user selects a participation level in which the first Category B data file is available for display to the first Category A user.

94. The method of Claim 77, further comprising the step of comparing the first Category A data file to a plurality of Category B data files.

95. The method of Claim 95, wherein, for each Category B data file, the comparing step occurs only if the first Category A user selects a participation level in which the Category A data file is available for display to the Category B user corresponding to the Category B data file, and if the Category B user corresponding to the Category B data file selects a participation level in which the Category B data file is available for display to the first Category A user.

96. The method of Claim 77, wherein each of the Category A data files describes a job-seeker, and each of the Category B data files describes a job.

97. The method of Claim 77, wherein each of the Category A data files describes a job, and each of the Category B data files describes a job-seeker.

98. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing, in a computer system, a data file having a set of characteristics;
assigning a unique reference identifier to the data file;
providing the unique reference identifier to a user without using the computer system;

and

upon the entry of the reference identifier into the computer system, displaying the data file to the user.

99. The method of Claim 98, wherein the step of providing the unique reference identifier to a user includes distributing the identifier to the user in a printed publication.

100. The method of Claim 99, wherein the step of distributing the identifier includes publishing the identifier in a newspaper.

101. The method of Claim 100, wherein the step of publishing the identifier in a newspaper includes the steps of publishing the identifier in a classified advertisement in the newspaper.

102. The method of Claim 98, wherein the user is a Category A user, and wherein the data file corresponds to a Category B user.

103. The method of Claim 102, wherein the data file is a Category A data file and the set of characteristics is a first set, the method further comprising the steps of:

storing, in the computer system, a Category B data file having a second set of characteristics; and

upon the entry of the reference identifier, comparing the Category A data file to the Category B data file using the first and second sets of characteristics.

104. The method of Claim 98, wherein the data file describes a job.

105. The method of Claim 98, wherein the data file describes an individual seeking companionship.

106. The method of Claim 98, wherein the data file describes goods offered for sale.

107. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a Category A data file having a first set of characteristics;

publishing the Category A data file in a specific marketplace;
storing a Category B data file having a second set of characteristics,
publishing the Category B data file in a specific marketplace; and
matching the Category A data file and the Category B data file only upon the
condition that both data files are published in the same marketplace.

108. The method of Claim 107, wherein the step of publishing the Category A data file includes the step of assigning a marketplace identifier to the Category A data file.

109. The method of Claim 108, wherein the step of publishing the Category A data file further includes the step of storing the marketplace identifier with the Category A data file.

110. The method of Claim 108, further including the step of determining whether the marketplace identifier corresponds to the second marketplace, and wherein the step of matching the Category A data file and the Category B data file occurs only if the marketplace identifier does correspond to the second marketplace.

111. The method of Claim 108, wherein the marketplace identifier is a first marketplace identifier and wherein the step of publishing the Category B data file includes the step of assigning a second marketplace identifier to the Category B data file.

112. The method of Claim 111, wherein the step of publishing the Category B data file further includes the step of storing the second marketplace identifier with the Category B data file.

113. The method of Claim 111, further including the step of determining whether the first marketplace identifier matches the second marketplace identifier, and wherein the step of matching the Category A data file and the Category B data file occurs only if the marketplace identifiers do correspond.

114. The method of Claim 107, further including the step of publishing the Category A data file in a third marketplace, wherein the third marketplace is different from the first marketplace.

115. The method of Claim 114, wherein the step of publishing the Category A data file in the first marketplace includes the step of storing a first marketplace identifier with the Category A data file, wherein the step of publishing the Category B data file in the second marketplace includes the step of storing a second marketplace identifier with the Category B data file, and wherein the step of publishing the Category A data file in the third marketplace includes the step of storing a third marketplace identifier with the Category A data file.

116. The method of Claim 115, further including the steps of determining whether the first marketplace identifier matches the second marketplace identifier and determining whether the third marketplace identifier matches the second marketplace identifier, and wherein the step of matching the Category A data file and the Category B data file occurs only if the second marketplace identifier does correspond to one of the first and third marketplace identifiers.

117. The method of Claim 115, further including the step of publishing the Category B data file in a fourth marketplace, wherein the fourth marketplace is different from the second marketplace, and wherein the step of publishing the Category B data file in the fourth marketplace includes the step of storing a fourth marketplace identifier with the Category B data file.

118. The method of Claim 107, further comprising the steps of:
providing a plurality of affiliated systems, each affiliated system providing access to data files; and

determining a marketplace for a data file on the basis of the affiliated system through which the data file is accessed.

119. The method of Claim 118, wherein the step of determining a marketplace for a data file includes the steps of:

determining a marketplace for the Category A data file on the basis of the affiliated system through which the Category A data file is accessed; and

determining a marketplace for the Category B data file on the basis of the affiliated system through which the Category B data file is accessed.

120. The method of Claim 119, wherein the step of publishing the Category A data file includes publishing the Category A data file in the determined marketplace for the Category A data file, and wherein the step of publishing the Category B data file includes publishing the Category B data file in the determined marketplace for the Category B data file.

121. The method of Claim 118, wherein each affiliated system provides access to Category A data files and Category B data files.

122. The method of Claim 118, wherein the step of providing a plurality of affiliated systems includes the steps of:

providing a plurality of Category A affiliated systems, each affiliated system providing access only to Category A data files; and

providing a plurality of Category B affiliated systems, each affiliated system providing access only to Category B data files.

123. The method of Claim 118, further comprising the step of facilitating the selection of a participation level for the Category A data file, wherein the participation level may be selected from at least a participating level and a non-participating level, and wherein the step of publishing the Category A data file includes the step of selecting the participating level for the Category A data file.

124. The method of Claim 123, wherein the step of facilitating the selection of a participation level includes the steps of:

facilitating the selection of a participation level for the Category A data file in a first marketplace; and

facilitating the selection of a participation level for the Category A data file in a second marketplace.

125. The method of Claim 107, wherein the step of publishing the Category A data file includes the steps of:

presenting a plurality of marketplace choices to a Category A user; and

determining the first marketplace on the basis of the Category A user's response to the presented marketplace choices.

126. The method of Claim 125, wherein the step of publishing the Category B data file includes the steps of:

presenting a plurality of marketplace choices to a Category B user; and

determining the second marketplace on the basis of the Category B user's response to the presented marketplace choices.

127. The method of Claim 125, wherein the marketplace choices include a plurality of geographic areas designations.

128. The method of Claim 127, wherein the geographic areas include areas defined generally by statistical metropolitan areas.

129. The method of Claim 125, wherein the marketplace choices include a plurality of industry sector designations.

130. The method of Claim 107, wherein each Category A data file describes a job.

131. The method of Claim 107, wherein each Category A data file describes an individual seeking companionship.

132. The method of Claim 107, wherein each Category A data file describes goods offered for sale.

133. A method of reciprocally publishing and matching data files, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a Category A data file having a set of characteristics corresponding to a Category A item;

storing a Category B data file having a set of characteristics corresponding to a Category B item;

using fuzzy logic to determine the degree of fit of the Category B data file relative to the Category A data file.

134. The method of Claim 133, wherein the step of using fuzzy logic to determine the degree of fit includes using fuzzy logic to compare a plurality of the Category B characteristics to respective Category A characteristics.

135. The method of Claim 134, wherein the step of using fuzzy logic to compare Category B characteristics to Category A characteristics includes using fuzzy logic to determine the degree of fit of each of the plurality of Category B characteristics to a respective Category A characteristic.

136. The method of Claim 133, wherein the Category B data file is a first Category B data file, the method further comprising the steps of:

storing a second Category B data file;

using fuzzy logic to determine the degree of fit of the second Category B data file relative to the Category A data file; and

ordering the Category B data files according to the relative fits of the respective Category B data files.

137. The method of Claim 133, further comprising the step of using fuzzy logic to determine the degree of fit of the Category A data file relative to the Category B data file, wherein the degree of fit of the Category A data file relative to the Category B data file is determined separately from the degree of fit of the Category B data file relative to the Category A data file.